

For 4 years in a row the Department of Homeland Security has had to tighten its belt. Everyone has. We have been willing to do that. We have operated at reduced funding. But the impact of the sequester—which is really a blunt instrument that cuts funding in a not very smart way. They are automatic cuts that were never intended, that were never designed to run the government. They were really designed to motivate us to do a better job of getting to the budget. That seems not to be working. As a result, these automatic cuts that are blunt, that are harsh, and that really are not smart are happening to all of our agencies, defense and nondefense alike. It is time to get rid of that inefficient way of operating and go to a more strategic, forward-leaning planning budget process.

I just want to mention an agency that I am very supportive of, the Coast Guard, not only because we build many of the boats in Louisiana but because so many of our people—and Massachusetts as well—are literally saved every year by the Coast Guard. We have lots of water, lots of lakes, lots of important work going on with offshore oil and gas drilling, and we are intercepting drugs that come into the United States. The Coast Guard is on the front line. They are operating their surface and air assets at 25 percent below planned levels because of sequestration—not smart cuts. It has resulted in a 30-percent reduction of drug seizures—people are not happy to hear this; I am not happy to say it—and an 11-percent reduction in the interdiction of undocumented migrants.

Under a yearlong CR, Customs and Border Protection would not be able to hire any new officers for our air, land, and sea ports of entry. This is bad news for travel and trade. The Presiding Officer knows, as people come into America they ask: Why do we have to wait so long in line? We just came here to do business. We have to get to New York, Chicago, Boston, Louisiana, California, and to other places where people come to do international business.

We can't shift assets from the past to the front line with a sequester. We can only do it with a rational budget that will help cities such as New York, Los Angeles, Houston, Chicago, Dallas, New Orleans and Miami to grow. This is important to business. It is important to the Chamber of Commerce.

So I urge my colleagues, let us work very hard together in a bipartisan way to come to some agreement on our budget, so that we can have direction as appropriators to design bills—whether it is for the Department of Education, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Commerce—to fashion budgets that meet future needs, that are not funding tired past priorities but are funding investing in the real future and real-time needs, present and future, of our citizens and of the great country that we believe in and want to see get stronger.

Under a year-long CR, DHS would not be able to implement safeguards to prevent unauthorized release of classified information. Vulnerabilities in the existing system were highlighted in the Wikileaks releases and the more recent disclosures by Edward Snowden. There was no funding in fiscal year 2013 to stop this type of activity so DHS's classified data will not be adequately protected without fiscal year 2014 funding.

Critical infrastructure protection efforts would be hindered. For example, without the \$34 million above the fiscal year 2013 sequester level, inspections of chemical plants to prevent weaponization by terrorists will be delayed. Funding to better coordinate Federal chemical programs in the wake of the West, Texas facility explosion will not be provided. Increases to prevent catastrophic impacts to critical infrastructure during manmade or natural disasters will be eliminated.

Because of these impacts, it is critical that we conference our fiscal year 2014 Senate bills with our House counterparts so that we can address the weaknesses that continuing to operate at sequestration levels would entail. A conference would also permit a necessary delay to flood insurance rate increases for properties that were formerly grandfathered into affordable rates since the House and Senate Homeland Security bills contain identical language on this issue. This is one small step in a larger effort I have been working on to fix flood insurance so that it is affordable, accessible and self-sustainable. Time and time again, Senators have heard from their constituents about the skyrocketing increases in flood insurance rates. Many homeowners throughout the United States will see their rates rise to unaffordable levels. For example, up to 2.9 million policies nationwide could see their previously grandfathered rates become absolutely unaffordable. One resident in my State of Louisiana could see rates increase from \$633 to over \$20,000 per year. That makes homeownership unachievable for many Americans and traps others in houses that they cannot sell.

We must get our work done. We need to agree on a budget for fiscal year 2014. Then we need to finalize our fiscal year 2014 bills so that our agencies have the appropriate funding for their critical missions—instead of lurching from one funding crisis to the next. This is a hard task but one I believe that is achievable. This is exactly what we were elected to do.

I thank Senator MIKULSKI for her leadership.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WARNER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 346.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to proceed.

The motion was agreed to.

#### NOMINATION OF CORNELIA T.L. PILLARD TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

##### CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have a cloture motion at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

##### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Cornelia T. L. Pillard, of the District of Columbia, to be United States Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit.

Harry Reid, Patrick J. Leahy, Richard J. Durbin, John D. Rockefeller IV, Benjamin L. Cardin, Jon Tester, Sheldon Whitehouse, Mark R. Warner, Patty Murray, Mazie Hirono, Angus S. King, Jr., Barbara Boxer, Jeanne Shaheen, Robert Menendez, Bill Nelson, Debbie Stabenow, Richard Blumenthal.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. REID. I now move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

#### DRUG QUALITY AND SECURITY ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. Is the motion to proceed to H.R. 3204 now pending?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion to proceed to H.R. 3204 is pending.

Mr. REID. I have a cloture motion at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

##### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII